PART THREE

THE SUNDAY JOURNAL.

EIGHT PAGES

PRICE FIVE CENTS. INDIANAPOLIS, SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 2, 1902. PRICE FIVE CENTS.

INDIAN SNAKE STORY

A FRENCHMAN'S HORRIBLE EXPERIENCE WITH COBRAS.

A Planter of British India Tells How He Was Persecuted by Brahmins Whom He Had Offended.

STOLE GIRL FROM THE TEMPLE

LIFE THREATENED AND SNAKES FINALLY LET LOOSE UPON HIM.

Blood-Curdling Sensation While They Crawled Across His Body for Two Hours—Safety in Stillness.

Correspondence of the Indianapolis Journal.

BENARES, British India, Jan. 25.—After I had mastered Hindostance, I mixed freely with the natives, determined to learn all that it was possible to learn of their customs, their religion and their literature, and as there was a temple of India in the neighborhood, I invited the dancers attached to it to perform at my plantation.

These people, called Bayaderes, are without caste, family ties or civil rights. Their daughters become servants of the temple, their sons enter the caste of musicians, while they are themselves slaves of the Brahmins, who occasionally hire them out to Europeans desirous of witnessing the "sacred dances."

The head Brahmin of the Pagoda of Mirsapoor charged me a good price for the loan of his troupe, but in recognition of my liberality allowed the girls to go without escort. For once they came without the argus-eyed "fakirs." They came attended only by the musicians.

As a consequence we were allowed to see the real sacred dances, not the meaningless gyrations usually exhibited before European travelers, when the girls "walk through their parts," banging small copper cymbals as an accompaniment.

The dance of the Bayaderes is full of plastic beauty and passion. After witnessing it for a while I could but think with pity of the performance of the greatest European artists I have seen. There was no toe dancing, no jumping—the Bayaderes merely sought to show off the harmonious lines of the body in every new pose. They were most graceful, most natural, most passionate. That they prepare for the ordeal by plentiful doses of hasheesh I can quite believe.

Only one of the girls seemed to lack vivacity. She danced in a perfunctory style and her eyes looked tired, sad and timid. I asked the band leader about her. No, Radhamonie was not ill; "it was just her way." She came from good stock. Her mother sent her to the temple as an offering of gratitude to the gods after rising from a sick bed.

I stepped up to the girl and addressed her in her own tongue. "You do not seem to like the dance? Are you grieving because your mother died after all?"

HUMAN SACRIFICE.

Radhamonie answered with a grimace of contempt: "I am not one of these girls. I was well born and my father was more than a weaver." (The weavers belong to one of the lowest castes and make it a practice to send their third-born daughters to the temple.)

"Then why did your mother sacrifice you to the pagoda?"

"I do not know, but I do know that punishment has already overtaken her. Her soul is now inhabiting a vampire."

"Poor girl," I said to myself, "your neck will never bear the 'fall' (sign of the married); the priests will sell you as a slave, like a parcel of merchandise." Radhamonie's eyes flashed as I spoke these words, and she murmured incoherent threats.

"So beautiful, yet an outcast!" I continued; "your countrymen will never again receive you in their houses; you dare not even speak to them without permission."

Radhamonie rose suddenly. "What's that to you?" she moaned—"to you, a stranger in these parts—an infidel? If you have any compassion on me don't tear my heart by reminding me of my misfortune."

"Will you flee with me?"

She answered an uncompromising "No."

"But if I gave you the means of flight, would you accept them for yourself alone?"

"With a thousand thanks. Ah, I will go to the Himalayas; there nobody knows what happened. Know, stranger, I was born at Nepaul, the city that lies on the embankment of the Aroma?"

"Very well," I said, "I will endeavor to find means and ways to send you home."

BRAHMINS' VENGEANCE.

After the dancers had departed it occurred to me that I had made rather foolish promises, for a man setting out to rescue a girl from the clutches of the Brahmins is taking his life in his hands. Of the lawful consequences I wasn't afraid. The English court would fine me a few hundred rupees and there the matter would end. But it would take considerable more to buy off the Brahmins—if they could be bought off at all—and the Europeans in our settlement were inclined to think they could not be bought off. In the latter case their secret vengeance had to be feared. The priests have several hundred fanatical fakirs in hand who do their bidding unflinchingly, without regard to law or other consequences. And my native servants—none of them would hesitate a minute to poison me if the Brahmins appealed to their religious prejudices.

Besides, I did not love the girl. The beauty of the Indian woman plays on the senses, but leaves the heart cold. Still, I had given my word and was too proud to disappoint the girl. So I decided to watch for a favorable opportunity to make good my promise at all hazards.

Flight from the temple was not impossible, but, suppose she made good her escape, how could she proceed on her journey, seeing that all native houses were closed against her? It is three hundred hours' travel from Benares to the Himalayas, and the news of her disgrace would surely overtake and outdistance the poor girl.

When I met her a few days later at the Rajah's palace I told her of my doubts and scruples, assuring her at the same time that, in spite of them, I was ready to help her.

"Keep your promise and leave the rest to me," she said as she drew away to join the dancers. A little later I again found occasion to speak to her. "I will come to you on the eve of the festival of the Goddess Kali," she whispered. "The Brahmins are too busy then to watch the slaves of the temple. Be alone; take care to send your native servants away before I come or all may be lost."

DANCER APPEARS.

I consented and did as she advised. When, on the evening in question, I was walking alone in the garden, striking the ground from time to time with the metal rings on my walking cane to drive away the cobras, a dark figure suddenly loomed up in my path. It was the young dancer, enveloped in a long dark cloak that left only her naked feet and her eyes free. I took her into the house, where she abandoned herself to her feelings of sorrow, remorse and desperation. And amid floods of tears she said to me:

"I am without caste, without family, without friends, yet I am not myself to blame that I am less than a street sweeper, that no one but a pariah would tolerate me in his house or at his table.

"You can use me as your slave; if it pleases you I will fetch water from the Ganges for your bath, only do not send me away. Who would give me rice and saffron? Without you I would be compelled to wash the dead ere they place them on the pyre on the Ganges embankment, and if I died my soul would migrate to a jackal's body, there to undergo the punishment of impurity and disgrace. I have weighed your words. No, I dare not return to my own country. The Brahmins would follow and point the finger of scorn at me. 'There,' they would say, 'this abandoned creature was consecrated to the service of the Goddess Kali, but fled from the sanctuary with the aid of an infidel.'"

"Very well," I said, touched by this appeal, "you may remain in the capacity of servant. As for the Brahmins, I don't fear them. And if they should attempt to harm you every European in the district would rise for your protection."

When I awoke next morning I found Radhamonie on the carpet in front of my bed. She was sleeping soundly. She was a girl of the mountains. Her figure was perfection and her skin had the sheen and softness of mother-of-pearl. As I was looking at her she awoke and jumped to her feet.

"Pardon the intrusion," she cried; "I did not feel safe on your door mat, where I lay down to sleep. Hide me, master, lest they take me away." To prevent legal complications I persuaded Radhamonie to sign a document setting forth that she was brought to the temple against her will and that she left voluntarily to escape the persecutions of the Brahmins; furthermore, that she had sought an asylum in my house of her own free well, craving the protection of the law for her act.

This paper I took to the district judge, who happened to be a friend of mine. He assured me that all the legal formalities were complied with. "But," he added, "prepare, nevertheless, to meet the Brahmins' vengeance. Never go unarmed and keep your eye on your cook. I am thirty-five years in India and know of numerous murders by poison that went unpunished for lack of evidence. In many cases the murderers were well known—even boasted of their crime that couldn't be fastened upon them."

I had no sooner left the courthouse when the Brahmins, backed by the Rajah of Mirzapoor, who was in love with Radhamonie, entered complaint against me, charging me with kidnaping the girl, but the Bayadere's statement above set forth took the ground from under their feet, and, being foiled, they began a series of persecutions that kept me in a turmoil for the next two months, until finally we secured some kind of respite by surrounding ourselves with Mussulman servants, who, as sworn enemies of the Brahmins, could not be corrupted by them. Only two Hindoos were left in the household, the gardener and the porter, theirs being positions that Mussulmans will not assume in India. These men were kept under constant surveillance, and, to all appearances, they were entirely faithful.

II.

This made me forget our danger at times, but Radhamonie never ceased to use the utmost precaution. She cooked my food, filtered every drop of water I drank and made the cook taste it with a spoon out of the same glass that was set before me. Nightly before I laid down to rest she searched my room and bed for cobras, fearing that one of the deadly reptiles might have been smuggled in. Needless to say, I never left the house in the dark unless attended by several of my Mussulman servants, one preceding, another following.

In the course of time I became used to the Indian custom of sleeping on the mat and carpet-covered floor; well that I did or I would not live to tell my story. In a sultry December night at about 2 a. m. (as I afterwards figured out) I felt somebody pulling my hair softly, steadily so as to awaken me by degrees. I was about to start when Radhamonie placed her hand on me.

"If you value your life and mine keep still. Do not move a limb. Listen."

"Are they after us?"

"Yes, a couple of hundred of them." And still keeping her hand on my breast the girl continued, after again admonishing me to observe the utmost composure: "We are in the power of the cobras," said Radhamonie. "Those temple fakirs have emptied three sackfuls of them through the open window. I watched them, for, hearing a noise, I crept in and prostrated myself on the floor by your side.

"If you listen you will hear the snakes move about the floor. They seem to be lively; in all probability the fakirs let them fast for a considerable time to double their aggressiveness. Oh, for a few basins of poisoned milk."

The best way to destroy cobras, you must know, is to place a vessel with poisoned milk in their way. Milk is their favorite food and they pounce upon it wherever they find it. As soon as the poison enters their system they become benumbed so that it is easy to make an end of them.

HAIR ROSE WITH TERROR.

My hair rose on end as I heard Radhamonie's words, and my fright increased as I listened. The cobra is one of the rare reptiles that produce noises aside from hissing and cracking his ribs. I heard them whistling all around me; it was not a loud, but a shrill, clamorous whistle, intermixed with tones that strangely resembled the clucking of a hen when she finds a grain of corn or an insect. I knew these tones too well to doubt Radhamonie even for an instant.

"We are gone," I whispered, though there was no apparent ground for the precaution, as the cobra cannot hear the human voice.

GIRL WANTS TO SAVE ME.

"No," said Radhamonie, decisively, "you at least must be saved. I will rise slowly and run out to get a snake charmer who can rid the room of these pests in five minutes. Even if I should get bitten, I will have strength enough to do that much. And if the servants refuse, I will myself bite them—they must and shall save you, master."

The magnitude of the danger had not taken away my sense of honor. "You shall do nothing of the kind, Radhamonie," I said sternly; "I, your master, forbid you to move. If you stir I will rise also and we will both be killed.

"But I must save you," cried the Indian girl."

"We will live or die together," I replied, pressing her hand.

"Now that you have given me proof of your affection I will gladly die," whispered the Bayadere.

"Let us hope for the best and instruct me how to conduct myself. I will follow your advice without questioning."

"Keep still, master; don't move a muscle, whatever happens. If you do a hundred hoods will be spread in an instant and we will die like rats in a pit."

My hand was still in hers, and I indicated assent by a slight pressure, afterward concentrating all my mind, my entire will power, to impersonate a log, to deny that I was alive. Meanwhile, the hissing, clucking and whistling continued, but as a matter of fact we were in no immediate danger until the spreading of hoods commenced.

COBRA'S DANGER SIGNAL.

The cobra spreads this singular attachment to its neck only when preparing to spring. In repose the hood lies flat, but the moment the viper is irritated it dilates and elevates under pressure of some twenty parts of the ribs of his neck and the forepart of the back. The cobra in our neighborhood has hoods ornamented with two black eyelike spots, united by a curved black stripe so formed that the whole mark formed a singular resemblance to a pair of spectacles; hence the Hindoo name, "spectacle snake."

"Be on guard, master," whispered Radhamonie. At the same time I felt her hand tremble slightly. "Be on guard, beloved of my soul."

The warning came none too early—without it I might have started suddenly and would have been killed, surely and quickly.

COBRAS TAKE A WALK ON ME.

A cold, slimy, bloated body was dragging itself across my naked breast. It had been so hot during the first part of the night that I had opened my shirt at the neck. I held my breath and it passed. Radhamonie's hand clutched my fingers like a vise. Neither of us dared breathe.

Another creeping body and still another. I counted twenty, forty, fifty. I was too horrified to keep track of them after that. They crawled over my breast, my legs, my feet. Twice the monsters drew their bodies across my face. When I felt their weight I thought it a thousand tons.

Four times I heard the clock strike—2:30, 3 o'clock, 3:30, 4 o'clock—an eternity.

And while these hundreds of the deadliest reptiles in the world used by body and Radhamonie's for walking exercises we lay like dead, perfectly motionless, in statue-like repose. If either of us had made the slightest movement we both would have been irredeemably lost. Our only safety was to imitate a wooden image or a block of stone. This we did—how we did it I cannot tell.

Finally we saw the shades of the night vanishing; it began to get light. Daybreak would bring my Mussulman servants. Ah! how I listened for a footstep, for the slightest noise outside. Inwardly I promised a fortune to the first person entering our room as a friend.

Suddenly on the stairs there was the sound of the familiar Bengal bagpipe. A snake charmer was coming.

Somebody opened the door and a well-known voice asked: "It's I, the gardener—are you dead, master?"

"No," I said; "do you think that the God of the Christians allows a man like me to perish by the hands of such dogs as the fakirs of the pagoda?"

"God be praised, the God of the Christians be praised, master. I will call off the snakes."

SNAKES DANCE.

And the scoundrel began to play on his bagpipe a curious tune, intermingled with tremolos. He began slowly, then played quicker and quicker, until his melody ended in an inarticulate crescendo. Then he began anew.

When he began playing the hissing and whistling of the cobras ceased. I opened one of my eyes and looked. A great many serpents were raising their heads, how many I cannot tell; I hadn't time to count. For the procession began again; the bagpipe irresistibly attracted them. Over our bodies they squirmed and leaped, danced and capered, gamboling after the gardener, who slowly descended the stairs, playing continuously. The exodus lasted about ten minutes. Finally the tune died away and stillness once more enveloped the room.

Radhamonie was first to rise, but cautiously lit a lamp before she jumped on her feet. The cobra is afraid of artificial light. When she threw open the shades, holding the lamp in front of her, we saw six snakes crawling along the wall. Of course, we lost no time in leaving the den of death. When we reached the veranda, where our Mussulman servants met us, the bayadere fainted. Until that moment she had persevered, but, the danger over, her nerves gave out.

I sent word at once to the European settlers, who dispatched half a dozen snake charmers. These and a few gallons of poisoned milk soon cleared my gardens of vipers.

When the constables arrived to arrest the gardener and the porter they could not be found. Doubtless the Brahmins had furnished them with means of escape beforehand.

Ten days later I left the plantation to seek my fortune elsewhere. In Salem, where I am now residing with Radhamonie, my wife, I found a new home.

I have no ambition to brave the vengeance of the Brahmins a second time, even though the English government offered me all possible protection. J. JACOILLOT.

A LAND OF CONTRASTS

MONEY IS MORE PLENTIFUL IN ENGLAND THAN ANYWHERE ELSE,

Yet a Vast Proportion of the Workers Are Without Adequate Shelter or the Comforts of Life.

SLOW CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS HAVE IMPROVED WAGES OF MANY.

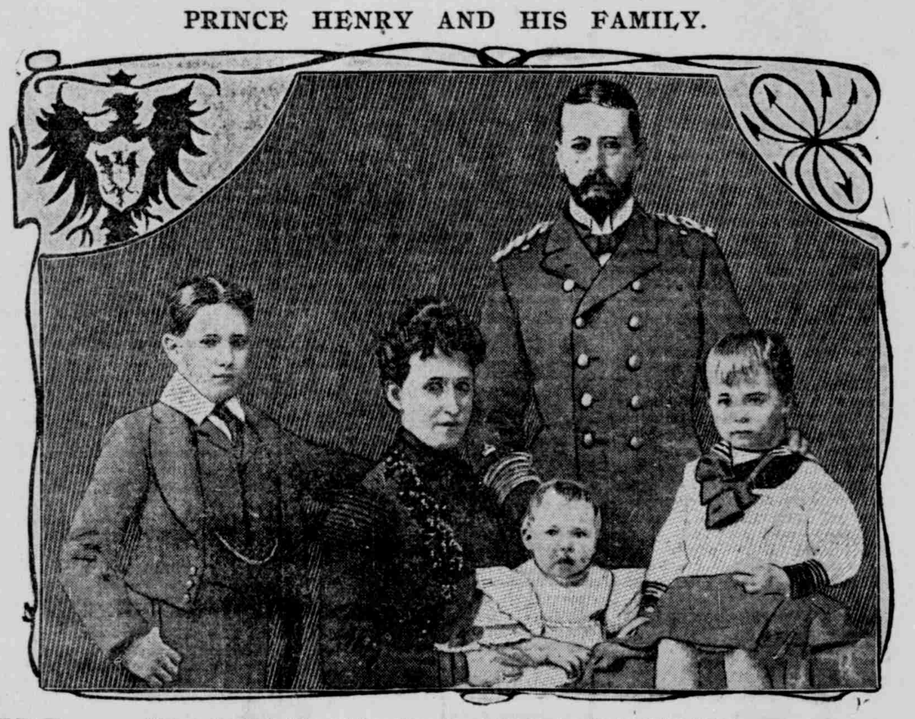
The Present Parliament Will Consider Two Measures Intended to Help the Working Classes.

Correspondence of the Indianapolis Journal.

LONDON, Feb. 19.—King Edward seems as strongly bent upon arousing England to a proper sense of her needs in view of the commercial rivalry of America, as does the Prince of Wales, and it is evident that acute and the lot of the common laborer so hard and hopeless, that Englishmen themselves, in moments of sober reflection, stand aghast at the situation, and many of the more thoughtful of them are amazed that the working classes, who have the voting power in their hands, do not use this franchise to bring about a complete revolution.

Not very long is it since Mr. Charles Booth, one of the most careful statisticians in England, demonstrated in his book, "The Life and Labor of the People of London," that in this wealthiest of the world's capitals 30 per cent. of the population were living below the poverty line, in houses that are unsanitary and with incomes insufficient for necessary food and clothing. Mr. Booth's conclusions were backed up by facts and figures so cold-blooded in their accuracy that no one dared to challenge them. All that the nation could do was to plead guilty and hide its blushes under purposes of reform. At that time, however, there was a general conviction that amongst the cities of England London was an exception and that in the other urban centers the proportion living below the poverty line could not be so great. Imagine, therefore, with what sadness and even shame the people of England have been made to realize, by another social investigator, Mr. Seebohm Rowntree, that the capital city of the empire is fully matched, in the relative number of its half-starved poor, by the cathedral city of York, a city famed hitherto for the magnificent specimen of church architecture which adorns

PRINCE HENRY AND HIS FAMILY.



[From a photograph taken not long before the prince's departure for the United States.]

one of his Majesty's pet methods for doing this is to receive in private audience, for a familiar confab on trade secrets—to pump them, presumably, of all they know—the commercial magnates of the United States. Since his reception last summer of a delegation from the New York Chamber of Commerce, those favored with the private handshake, and all the other overpowering condescensions of a royal interview, have been Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan and Mr. Charles M. Schwab, the latter of whom was in audience with his Majesty so recently that he will hardly yet, though he has since crossed the ocean, have divested himself altogether of the elation of spirits consequent upon such an interview. If reports in newspapers are correct Mr. Schwab was certainly under the spell of his Majesty's reception when he was last heard from in London, and the remark he is said to have made at that time shows how careful one ought to be, in hobnobbing with Kings, not to be blinded by the glamors of royalty to the hard facts of work-a-day life.

The scene was at Waterloo Station, when Mr. Schwab was en route to the steamship St. Paul at Southampton. The President of the United States Steel Corporation had been separated, in the process of saying good-bye to friends, from his better half. Suddenly Mrs. Schwab grabs at the steel magnate's arm and says, in a tone of mingled playfulness and reproach, "You've left me without any money, and I want some at once to give to a beggar," when up speaks her liege lord, with memories of Sir Thomas Lipton's country palace and his Majesty's town house full and strong upon him, exclaiming, "Why, you surprise me. I had no idea there was anybody in England who needed money." In a playful tone was this remark made, of course, for there is no doubt that even millionaires find it politic to be as pleasant as possible when their wives hold them up for money. But, as Shakspeare says, "One may smile and smile and"—still be very sarcastic or even very serious, and the question is, had Mr. Schwab seen only one side of English life, that which rolls in affluence and disports itself in palaces, reaching the conclusion from this one-sided view that he had seen the whole of it, or had he seen both sides—the sumptuousness of the rich and titled and the squalor of the poor? In the latter case his remark would have to be taken as a parting dab at the shocking and shameful contrasts afforded in English life; an instance of the revolt, ironically expressed, of an American soul, of even a rich American, against the appalling fact that in England, where money is so plentiful, there are so many who have to beg for their bread and that, to offset the palaces of royalty and the country seats of the titled and rich, there is such a vast proportion of the working classes who are necessarily without any of the comforts of life while they still toil hard, and without any prospect but the poorhouse as they look forward to old age.

A STEADY IMPROVEMENT.

To do justice to England it must be frankly admitted that the conditions of working-class life have improved steadily in the last twenty-five years. Excepting only amongst her two million of farm laborers, wages are higher than they were in every line of employment. Notwithstanding the recent statement by the Bishop of Stepney that, in London alone, 800,000 persons are living in dwellings not fit for human habitation, there has been, also, and there is still going forward, a great improvement in the housing of the working classes. In education, too, the opportunities of the masses have of late greatly increased and multiplied. But in neither of these respects is England even yet "in the running" with the United States, while the contrasts of life are still so enormous, the gulf between rich and poor so vast, class distinctions so it, but which, hereafter, from the picture given of it by Mr. Rowntree, will be famed and rather ill-famed in quite another way.

A GENERAL CONDITION.

The facts in regard to York, with its towering cathedral and not more than 70,000 inhabitants, would hardly be worth quoting were they peculiar to that city alone or to that city as a small and sad epitome of the greater city of London. But all thinking people over here are now agreed that the other cities and big towns of England, were they canvassed and tabulated in the same way, would make a showing equally lamentable. So that the facts in regard to poverty in York are of far-reaching significance, well worth studying even by Americans. Mr. Rowntree chooses as his basis the diet allowed to paupers—so much bread, so much meat, etc. This he takes as "the minimum necessary to physical efficiency." He certainly has not put his standard very high, and after averaging the families as to the stomachs to be filled and backs to be clothed, etc., his estimate is that each family, to meet its minimum needs in these directions, must have a weekly income of not less than 21s 8d, just a trifle over $5. But he finds in York 640 families of laborers whose income is 5s a week below that sum—who, in other words, lack regularly about one-fourth of the amount necessary to give them enough to eat and to keep them decently sheltered and clothed. Altogether the number of people Mr. Rowntree found in York who, according to their income, hadn't enough to keep the wolf from the door; or could only have by never spending a penny for anything save the barest necessaries, were about 28 per cent. of the total population, and if one accepts the English view that York is only typical in this matter of the other towns of England, one can see at once, from such cold-blooded figures, that poverty is at present the normal condition of more than one-fourth of the inhabitants of the British islands.

Scarcely fair is it to compare the conditions of English life with those obtaining in the United States unless one bears in mind that Great Britain started long before we did and under an entirely different system. She has not the affluent resources of America. She has been handicapped, too, by the class spirit and is to-day hidebound by hoary traditions. Given in England the sense of individualism and the personal ambition which are the birthright of the American, with the same chance for workmen to become masters and with a government as responsive as ours to the popular will, and this custom-fettered, tradition-cursed old country would soon give a better account of herself. But as things are, to talk of Americanizing England is largely nonsense, because it would involve such sweeping changes. And the fact that you cannot Americanize it thoroughly is what makes so difficult and absurd the present craze for Americanizing it along the lines of trade and commerce.

The inconsistency of this latter endeavor is glaringly apparent to the British workman at the present moment because of the demand of his employers that, with no increase of pay to spur him on, he shall still help them to compete with the foreign invader by turning out more work. Upon this point Mr. R. Bell, a labor member of Parliament, said the other day that "if English employers wanted to Americanize English workmen they must introduce some other American methods, such as the three square meals a day which American workmen demanded—not hovels to live in and meals of cheese and bloaters." He himself, Mr. Bell went on to say, was prepared to Americanize everything, but he hardly thought it right for employers to try to Americanize the English workman in regard to his output until they were ready also to Americanize him in his wages.

In reference to all these blots and blurs on the social and economic escutcheon of old England the facts which give hope are that the masses are beginning to see them in their true light and that social agitators are vigorously striving by books, pamphlets, lectures and increasing pressure upon Parliament to remove these disfiguring and disgraceful stains. Should England fail to lift herself by and by out of the old ruts and to lift her workmen out of their present state of semi-poverty it will certainly not be for lack of plans having this object in view nor of parliamentary bills warranted by their authors to accomplish this desirable object. But sad is it to think that Parliament for some time past has been almost wholly occupied with affairs abroad and is likely to be for some time to come. The cry for home reform is drowned in the screams for empire. Thus the extremities are having the care which ought to be given to the heart, which in every nation is, after all, the seat of life and the power by which alone its greatness can be maintained. Striking, indeed, was the truth uttered the other day by an English workman on the platform. "The government telescopes," he said, "are of too long range. I should like to see them broken and other telescopes supplied through which the government might see more of Great Britain and less of India and Africa."

RELIEF MEASURES.

But all things come to those who wait, providing they do enough pulling and thumping and killing while they wait, and undoubtedly the cry of the poor and suffering in this land will bring its response in the course of years, if not immediately. Before the present session of Parliament there are, or will be, two measures of reform which, if they should pass, would improve the social condition and add to the comfort and dignity of the working classes to an almost inconceivable extent, and which, though they should fail of enactment at present, will at least give new heart to the British workman, because they will hold up to him lofty ideals of what he may expect in the course of time, and will assure him, by the discussion they are certain to evoke in Parliament, that the country at large is getting better acquainted with his condition and needs. One of these measures is for the establishment of fair rent courts. A serious grievance now is that often in London and other crowded centers one-third of the workmen's pay is swallowed up in house rent, and even then he doesn't get enough room for his family to live in decently, nor such surroundings as are necessary to health. But let this fair rent bill pass, and, upon the application of six tenants of houses occupied by the working classes, a court will be established consisting of one member from the Chamber of Commerce, one from the Trades Council, and another chosen by these, and this court will adjudicate between tenants and landlords, and will finally, it is hoped, make rent sweaters as odious and criminal as sweaters of labor are held to be.

Here would be partial relief, at any rate, yet this proposal for a fair-rent court is thrown completely into the shade by one of the other bills by which the present Parliament will be asked to legislate in behalf of the working classes. The great bugbear of laboring men in England, especially of that 30 per cent. of the population which is below the poverty line, is that they can make no provision for old age, but must very generally, if they are so unfortunate as to outlive their ability to work, become objects of charity and end their days as paupers. In the poorhouses of England there are half a million of dependents to-day, not to speak of the vast multitude who are receiving out-door relief. Yet those who are already landed in this miserable goal are not one-fourth as many as those who are heading toward it, who must needs go on for long years, fighting their hand-to-mouth battle, with the dreary prospect that even if they do their best the crown of it all will be nothing better than the brand and hard pillow of public pauperism.

A THING MUCH NEEDED.

Let the reader imagine that it would be mean for this great army of toilers, consciously moving in the direction of some English poorhouse, doomed to this fate, many of them, most of them, by the poverty in which they have to pass their years of usefulness, could some scheme be devised assuring them of decent support in old age, and cheering them, as they still plod on through life, working hard for little pay, with the thought that when they can work no more they will get a pension with no stigma of their pauperism or charity attached to it. This subject has long been agitated both in and out of Parliament, and no one who has studied English life can doubt that finally some such scheme as the foregoing will be enacted into law. Blessed forever will be the government that fathers and effectualizes such a measure of working-class relief. Besides showing mercy to the helpless poor that government will remove the greatest reproach that anyone at present can allege against the British nation. And to the credit of England be it said that, only for the inability of those favoring such a provision to agree upon its details, an old age pension bill would in all likelihood have been passed some years ago.

One can only at present speculate as to what such a measure as might pass Parliament would comprehend. The first bill to go through would not be sweeping; it would meet the popular demand in part only, for the mills of the English gods when dealing with social grist always grind slowly and rarely do more than throw out a little at a time. But they also grind surely and never turn the other way about. Reforms when once begun are certain here to continue and extend. No reaction is likely. So that the English workman, if he sees any kind of a pension scheme offered to him, may confidently hail it with hope if not with satisfaction. Meanwhile, however, the workmen themselves, through their trade and co-operative congresses, have drafted a bill, and it will come up in due time for parliamentary action. But no one imagines it will have the least chance of passing. It is too drastic and far-reaching for that. It proposes, indeed, nothing less than a universal pension of five shillings a week for every man and woman in the kingdom, to begin at the age of sixty and to be provided for by imperial taxation.

HENRY TUCKLEY.

London's Mighty Famine.

London Express.

There are two things which invariably strike the Englishman on his return to London from America or the continent. One is that London, the greatest city in the world, is one of the worst lighted, and the other is that the Londoner is compelled to starve between 12:30 a. m. and breakfast time. That public houses where only liquor is sold should be closed at 12:30 is only reasonable and proper. But why should a man who has arrived in London after a long journey be compelled to go without food? The supper party after the theater, when several people are asked to meet at a given place, resolves itself into a scramble against time. Surely it is time these benighted regulations were altered, and no time for altering them could be better chosen than the beginning of the coronation season, when so many foreigners will pour into London.

THE KINGDOM OF TORY

ISLAND OFF IRISH COAST WHICH CLAIMS INDEPENDENCE.

Denies Allegiance to England's King and Refuses to Pay Taxes Levied by British.

RULED BY KING AND PRIEST

DESCENDANTS OF GIANTS, THE PEOPLE ARE BIG AND BOLD.

Gunboat and Constables Have Been Dispatched Against Them, but They Are Not Afraid.

Correspondence of the Indianapolis Journal.

LONDON, Feb. 20.—So Great Britain has another war on hand. The Admiralty has just ordered a gunboat to the seat of hostilities, the Irish kingdom of Tory, there to co-operate with the constables of Donegal county in subduing the "enemy."

Your correspondent experienced some difficulty in locating Tory. Londoners do not know that such a "kingdom" exists within the realm, but the War Office and treasury do, for have they not been fighting these Irish sovereigns for time immemorial?

I traveled from Letterkenny by rail and post chaise and cart some forty miles, and at the Atlantic found the captain of a fish steamer abundantly willing to take me across to the Irish principality for 5 shillings. (Natives may enjoy the trip for 2 pence.)

On the way—nine miles—the gay seadog told me all about "Tory." It is a lonely island, a stranger to twentieth-century notions of government, progress and civilization in general, and, like ancient Poland, it is a republic under a king, or really two kings, one looking after mundane affairs, the other tending to the souls of the people.

Its 500 inhabitants recognize no earthly lord and no code of laws save that of their own making. The stranger respectfully mentioning King Edward in Tory island takes his life in his hand, and standing without the pale of the United Kingdom and recognizing no ties between them and the King of Great Britain, Emperor of India, nor his lords, bailiffs, tax collectors, constables and other officials, the islanders, as a matter of course, refuse to be taxed or pay rent for the soil their ancestors owned and controlled long before Downing street was thought of.

And that is where the main trouble arises. One of Edward's glorious ancestors, it appears, gave the island to a beloved mistress, whose sons and grandsons and great-grandsons ever since vainly tried to collect ground tax. "Not a farthing," said the islanders in their rude Gaelic to the landlord's agent, and "not a copper coin" they repeated when the tax gatherer of Donegal county came along. They have been saying it for four or five hundred years without tiring out the landowner and the treasury, until now these worthies' patience is exhausted. Treasury and landlord have decided that an end must be made of the "unlawful" state of things—hence the gunboat and massing of constables on shore.

READY FOR DEFENSE.

Arriving at the lighthouse docks on the northwest side of the island, with the warlike tales of the captain still ringing in my ears, I expected to see a sort of miniature Gibraltar—guns on rocky ledges commanding the sea, Tory's natural defenders drilling for slaughter—but the rocks proved as innocent of warlike accoutrements as they did of the time of Caesar and the islanders sat in their cabins mending nets, patching up sails, dinking whisky and hoping for better weather.

"If the British try to invade our country, they will find us ready," said the priest, who is the only islander speaking English in a broken sort of way.

"Preparations?" he continued. "We are always prepared—our means for defense are forever on hand."

"Then you are well provided with arms?"

"Yes, we have rifles and hatchets and things of that kind, as many as we need, but we are not dependent upon them. You must know that God built a wall of rocks round us that no English man-of-war can cross—and swim. The John Bulls tried it several years ago, and, let us hope, have not forgotten the lesson."

The reverend gentleman alluded to the loss of the gunboat Wasp, that foundered on the south coast of Tory island Sept. 22, 1884, sinking with all on board. The Wasp had been sent to coerce the islanders into an agreement on the tax question, and, at the same time, collect at least part of the money "due" the landlord. If the islanders refused to pay—so read the Wasp's orders—they were to be driven from their homes as delinquent tenants, like poor peasants in other parts of Ireland.

At that time the people of Tory were prepared to give the landing party the warmest reception it ever experienced, and every man, woman and child was sworn to defend home and acre with the last drop of blood in his or her veins; in fact, not to budge an inch while life remained.

But, as stated, the expedition came to an end ere operations had begun, the islanders even profiting by the enemy's misfortune, as they gained a considerable amount of wood, iron, clothes and other goods from the wreck. To-day they are just as determined as then, but less inclined to believe that the British threats will be put into execution.

"The English must know that St. Columba protects Tory as shown on that glorious September day, seventeen years ago—fatal to them—so what would be the use of fitting out another expedition against us?" asked the priest with the naiveness born of true piety and trust in the righteousness of one's cause.

STURDY FISHERMEN.

The Tory islanders are either fishermen or manufacturers, other professions save those and the offices of King and priest are unknown. The men and women make their own clothes, shoes and sails, they are their own architects, carpenters and what not. Their boats they buy in Norway—on the installment plan. The installment plan, some think, is a new wrinkle, but the Tory islanders have known it for centuries. When a boy gets old enough to steer his own craft, he orders one from the Norway shipbuilder, paying for his boat either in fish or money earned in fishing.

The waters about the island abound in cod, sole, plaice, herring and mackerel; there are also lobsters in plenty. Weekly a steamer arrives to take away the fresh